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■ NAGAPATTINAM ■ THRISSUR ■ KALABURAGI

Mangled remains of the AI Express that crash-landed at Kozhikode airport (top); the spot where the plane landed after skidding off the runway | PTI

WHAT HAPPENED

■ Pilot Deepak V Sathe and co-pilot Akhilesh Kumar tried to land the jet on runway number 28, but failed. It was raining, but visibility was 2,000 metres

■ Plane circled the airport a number of times

■ **7.41 PM:** The plane approached from the sea side and landed on runway 10. Actual touchdown marker is around 1,000 feet from the start of the runway (about 300 metres of the 2,860-metre runway), but the plane touched down at near mid-point (about 1,500 metres)

■ It overshot to the Runway End Safety Area (RESA) and veered off the surface, plunged 35 feet and crashed into the boundary wall of the airport and split into two

■ Soon after the crash, fire tenders circled the area and sprayed foam to form a protective carpet around the flight as fuel was leaking

■ Passengers came out through the broken part of the aircraft before the rescue operations begin at 8pm

■ **11.45 PM:** Rescue operation was completed when all the trapped passengers were removed from the mangled remains of the aircraft

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PASSENGERS UNDERGOING TREATMENT AT HOSPITALS

Bad weather or cockpit error? Theories abound

Centre orders probe into Air India Express crash at Kozhikode airport

DHINESH KALLUNGAL @ TPuram

A day after the Air India Express plane skidded off the Kozhikode Airport runway and split into two, claiming 18 lives, the focus on Saturday was on finding the reasons for the crash. While a section of aviation experts and staff at the airport pointed fingers at the cockpit crew, others questioned the standard of the runway.

While an investigation has begun, an analysis of the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder is expected to provide vitals clues. They were sent to New Delhi for retrieving data.

Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, talking to reporters in Kozhikode, said, "Let's not speculate. The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau is conducting an investigation," he said. The minister, however, ruled out tabletop runway being the reason for the accident. "This is not the only airport with a tabletop runway. We've other airports and our neighbouring countries too have airports with tabletop runways," he said.

Captain Deepak Vasant Sathe

First Officer Akhilesh Kumar

Theories and rumours about the possible reasons for the crash — from hydroplaning to tailwind to pilot error — were doing the rounds right from Friday night. Doha-based aviation expert Jacob K Philip said the chances of hydroplaning are very remote as there were only light showers during the time of the accident. "At least 3mm water is required on the runway for hydroplaning, a process in which a layer of water builds between the wheels of the aircraft and the runway surface, leading to a loss of traction that prevents the aircraft from responding to control inputs. But the topography of the airport and its runway and the light rain during the time of accident can rule out this," he said. CONTINUED ON: P7

Questions over future of airport

DHINESH KALLUNGAL & KUMAR VIKRAM @ TPuram / New Delhi

THE future of Kozhikode airport, which witnessed the first crash involving a passenger aircraft in the state on Friday night that claimed 18 lives, will depend on several factors that will emerge from the findings of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB). The agency launched an investigation into the air crash on Saturday.

The operation of wide-bodied aircraft at the airport was suspended from May 2015 in the wake of the Court of Inquiry report on the Air India Express Boeing 737 crash in Mangaluru in May 2010.

Later, the DGCA had, in 2018, given the nod for the operation of the wide-bodied aircraft with some riders.

CONTINUED ON: P7

India, China hold talks on Depsang

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

DIVISION commanders of the Indian and Chinese armies met on Saturday for a long overdue discussion on the Depsang bulge standoff in eastern Ladakh.

"Major Generals of both sides met at 11am at Daulat Beg Oldi. Depsang is included in the itinerary," a senior army officer said. The two sides will also discuss other areas where talks for disengagement have not made much progress.

The Indian side is being led by Major General Abhijit Bapat, the General Officer Commanding of the 3 Division, which is entrusted with defending the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh. CONTINUED ON: P7

Language skill test for non-Kannadigas likely

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

NON-Kannadigas who plan to study or work in Karnataka may soon have to take up a Kannada language skills exam on the lines of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

The Kannada Development Authority (KDA), which is working on the module, is expected to roll it out by November 1.

The Sarojini Mahishi Report had recommended reservation for Kannadigas in jobs in the private sector in Karnataka. Since the state cannot make it mandatory, it amended the Karnataka Industrial Employment Rules, 1961, a few months ago stressing that priority should be given to Kannadigas in private sector jobs. As per the rules, those residing in Karnataka for not less than 15 years and who can write, read, talk and understand Kannada are eligible to be recruited by private industries for clerical and other jobs.

"We are preparing some modules similar to TOEFL and one has to clear it to study or work here. There will two modules — one for the skilled labour class and another for the white collar employees. It will be simple Kannada," KDA Chairman T S Nagabharana told TNSE. P5

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EXPRESS READ

Former Lt Guv Murmu sworn in as CAG

New Delhi: Former J&K Lt Governor Girish Chandra Murmu was sworn in on Saturday as the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

CHUGGING INTO THE PAST P2

50% OF ALLOTTED VENTILATORS

STATES HAVE GOT FROM CENTRE SO FAR

An RTI reply shows that of the 17,968 ventilators allocated to states till July 10, only 9,150 instruments had been delivered.

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RAINS ABATE, BUT DAMS BRIMMING

Rescue personnel conducting a search operation near the Srikateshwara temple in Nanjangud on Saturday | UDAYSHANKAR S | REPORTS: 3 & 5

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